THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Indian Army is authorized to maintain two sets of special clothing and mountaineering equipment for Siachen and Super High Altitude areas. Out of these, one set is authorized to the troops in the field formations and the second set is maintained as reserve. There are no shortages in the special clothing and mountaineering equipment. No proposal to provide for the third set of clothing is under consideration of the Government as the present system of providing 100 per cent reserve is adequate.

It is a fact that total amount required for three sets of winter clothing a year is Rs. 142.2 crores out of the Defence budget of Rs. 72,000 crores.

Shortage of special clothing and equipment for troops at high altitudes

589. SHRIANAMD SHARMA:
SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported shortage of special clothing and equipment for troops deployed in high altitude regions;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Army headquarters to ensure adequate and timely availability of the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Indian Army is authorized to maintain two sets of special clothing and mountaineering equipment for Siachen and Super High Altitude areas. Out of these, one set is authorized to the troops in the field formations and the second set is maintained as reserve. There are no shortages in the special clothing and mountaineering equipment.

Upgradation of IAF

590. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF Chief has suggested downsizing and simultaneously upgrading IAF to make it more effective;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Chief of Air Staff has not suggested downsizing of the Indian Air Force. Upgrading of the Indian Air Force is a continuous and dynamic process.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

MBT Arjun

591. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a)whether it is a fact that Army has directed Armoured Corps to compare Arjun with Russian-made T-90;

(b) if so, whether the tests are over; and

(c) the number of Arjun MBTs inducted so far into the Indian Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. Army has directed that newly manufactured Arjun Tanks be put through the field trials to ensure quality in manufacture for operationalisation.

(b) No, Sir. The tests are yet to be undertaken.

(c) Apart from 15 pre-production, five tanks from production lot are in the process of being handed over to field formations after the "Joint Resident Inspection (JRI)."

Increase in infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir

592. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is improving;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the infiltration in the valley has increased since January, 2004; and

(d) if so, the reasons for improvement of the situation in the valley?